

House of Representatives in those days, as was the Presiding Officer representing a district in New Mexico. We saw in those days the drug companies writing the Medicare legislation. The legislation was a bailout for the drug and insurance companies in the name of Medicare privatization. We saw it on trade issues. We saw the big companies that outsource jobs write trade agreements, such as NAFTA and CAFTA. On health care issues, we saw the big insurance companies writing legislation, assisting President Bush in getting his pro-insurance company legislation through. We know on the energy legislation, something the Presiding Officer worked to try to fix—unfortunately, we were all unsuccessful in the Bush years—with regard to writing energy legislation, we saw the oil companies do that.

If we do not fix this, if we do not pass the Schumer bill, we are going to see a further betrayal of the middle class, further betrayal of democratic ideals—democratic with a small “d.” We no longer can brook in this institution, giving the drug companies the authority to write Medicare legislation, the insurance companies the ability to write health care legislation, the big companies that outsource the ability to write trade legislation, the oil industry to write energy legislation. It has happened over and over again. We should have learned this lesson this decade.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle are very comfortable with helping their benefactors, with helping the oil industry, the drug companies, the insurance companies, and those big companies that move overseas and outsource our jobs. That is why the DISCLOSE Act is very important. Whether you are a Republican or a Democrat, you do not want to see our democratic system become the puppet of corporate America or any other special interest. You do not want to give corporations the ability to drown out the voices of the people—their customers, workers, and, frankly, their shareholders.

The least we can do is empower citizens with information to evaluate the motives behind corporate and special interest spending. I do not want to see these huge dollars spent in these races, to be sure. But at a minimum, we have to make sure the public knows who is spending it, who the executives are who will benefit from these huge expenditures from the drug and insurance companies, from the oil industry, and those big companies that outsource.

It is a pretty clear choice. A vote for the DISCLOSE Act, a vote for cloture is a vote for the public interest. A vote against cloture, a vote against the DISCLOSE Act is getting right in line with giving those special interests—Wall Street, the drug companies, the insurance companies, the big companies that outsource jobs, the oil industry—what they want.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank my colleague once again for his outstanding pointed words—right on the money—and we will hear the end of this debate after we close.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS TECHNICAL ADJUSTMENT ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged of H.R. 5610, the Independent Living Centers Technical Adjustment Act, and that the Senate then proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the title of the bill.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5610) to provide a technical adjustment with respect to funding for independent living centers under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in order to ensure stability for such centers.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Senator HARKIN has a technical amendment, and I ask that the amendment be considered agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 4518) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To extend a date)

In section 2(a)(2)(A), strike “July 30” and insert “August 5”.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 5610), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote scheduled to occur at 2:45 p.m. today be delayed to occur at 3 p.m., with the time division as previously ordered and under the same conditions and limitations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:31 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:16 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BEGICH).

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

DISCLOSE ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 3 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority leader controlling the final 15 minutes prior to a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 3628.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I am going to proceed on my leader time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator can proceed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, 8 years ago, Congress passed and the President signed a bill known as the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act or BCRA. This bill was the culmination of a long and protracted battle in which I played a major part, as many of my friends on both sides of the aisle will recall. It garnered bipartisan support and bipartisan opposition. Many hearings were held, studies were conducted, and a lengthy record on both sides of the issue was developed.

I strongly opposed that bill. But I commend its authors for one thing: In drafting and passing BCRA, they made every effort to ensure that everybody had to play by the same rules—rules, moreover, that would not take effect in the middle of an election year. They wanted to make sure there was no appearance of giving one party a partisan advantage, and in that they succeeded.

Fast forward to today. Late last week, Democratic leaders decided to take us off of the small business bill to move to the DISCLOSE Act, a bill that is the mirror opposite of BCRA in the partisan way it was drafted and in the partisan way it is being pushed ahead of an election.

Let's be perfectly clear here. This bill is not what its supporters say it is. It is not an effort to promote transparency. It is not a response to the Supreme Court's ruling in Citizens United which has now been the law of the land for 7 months and which, contrary to the breathless warnings of some, has not caused the world to stop turning on its axis.

This bill is a partisan effort, pure and simple, drafted behind closed doors by current and former Democratic campaign committee leaders, and it is aimed at one thing and one thing only. This bill is about protecting incumbent Democrats from criticism ahead of this November's election—a transparent attempt to rig the fall election.